

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An update management system provides access to software updates (patches and upgrades) and to an update catalog server. The catalog server includes a chronology generator. When a request
5 for an update family tree for a target update is received, the chronology generator accesses an index to find the database and record number for the target update. The record is retrieved, indicating updates superseded by the target update and updates superseding the target update. Records for the superseded and
10 superseding updates are, in turn, retrieved. The process is iterated until there are no further superseding and no superseded updates indicated. The succession relations indicated in the retrieved records are arranged into a family tree for the target patch. The family tree can be used (along with dependency data) to help
15 determine an update for a given workstation that optimizes performance and compatibility. Optionally, the family tree can be used to generate an update state list to assist in the optimization.